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AUTHOR Griffith, William S.; Roberts, Pearl J.
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ABSTRACT

Because more adults pursue systematic education in other than the traditional educational institutions, the collection of baseline data on participation, participants, programs, and providers poses a difficult challenge. A 1970-71 survey found that preparing full-time researchers was not identified as the primary purpose of any adult education training program, a finding consistent with the relatively low research emphasis and productivity of the field. Canadian efforts to compile and analyze adult education research have shown that the descriptive method is most widely employed, and experimental and theoretical research is scarce. Researchers represented a wide range of subject matter specializations; however, most had not had formal training in research methodology. Main focuses of the research have been particular movements and organizations, participation, methods, and theory of education. During the last decade, the Canadian provinces have become increasingly interested in studying adult education and formulating policy for its support and operation. Research topics have included adult education provisions, organization, and program coordination. Two kinds of action have been identified to increase the quantity, quality, and utility of Canadian adult education research: support of selected areas of research with marked utility for Canadian society and an improved research system. (YLB)

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ADULT EDUCATION

William S. Griffith
Pearl J. Roberts*

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Adult education is often described as an emerging field of university study and research because its formal development began much more recently than did elementary, secondary and higher education. Many relatively well-informed Canadians remain uncertain of the dimensions of the field because they have encountered one or a few aspects of it and make the mistake of assuming that the whole is composed of nearly identical parts -- a quite erroneous assumption. Because of this confusion regarding the nature of the field, there is a corresponding lack of knowledge and appreciation of the research activity within it. The purposes of this report are to clarify the nature of the field of adult education, particularly as an area of scholarly activity, to describe the range of researchers and research undertaken either within it or in contiguous areas, and to identify actions which might be taken by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to increase the quantity, quality and utility of Canadian adult education research.

DEFINING ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education has been defined variously by international, national, provincial, and non-governmental bodies as well as by individual scholars.

In 1976 UNESCO stated "The term 'adult education' denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and

* William Griffith, Professor, Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education, University of British Columbia. Pearl Roberts, Community Programmer, Kwantlen College, Surrey Campus.

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methods, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development; . . ." (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 1980: p. 3).

The organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1977: p. 7) said that

Adult education refers to any learning activity or programme deliberately designed to satisfy any learning need or interest that may be experienced at any stage in his or her life by a person who is over the statutory school-leaving age and whose principal activity is no longer in education. Its ambit thus spans non-vocational, vocational, general, formal or non-formal studies as well as education with a collective social purpose.

Liveright and Haygood, of the Centre for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, provided a process oriented definition (1968: p. 2):

Adult education is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programmes are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes; or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems.

Although adult education has been a field of practice as long as human adults have been assisting one another to learn, public awareness of adult education as a discrete field of human endeavour is still relatively limited. As is the case with other fields of practice, the knowledge base begins to develop almost imperceptibly as reflection and intuition interact until it is recognized that some individuals perform more effectively than others. Programmes of apprenticeship evolve informally and slowly. The knowledge becomes codified and managed by a group of individuals who are aware of their role in maintaining and improving both the base of knowledge and the practice.

Coolie Verner, long-time professor of adult education at The University of British Columbia, noted that the inability of some educators to accept

adult education as a distinct field and discipline stems from their narrow view of the phenomenon of education. He observed that "Since schools of education are principally concerned with the preparation of professional leadership for, and the advancement of knowledge about the traditional educational institutions in society, education is equated with schooling, and learning with education" (1978: p. 133).

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS

Individuals seeking to comprehend the institutional dimensions of the education field often confuse a single institutional form or a small number of diverse kinds of institutions with the full range of the field. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) produces a "Taxonomy of Adult Education Agencies" that clarifies the diversity of the kinds of institutions providing adult education to lesser or greater degrees (OECD, 1977: p. 39):

Taxonomy of Adult Education Agencies

1. Government or local government institutions existing primarily or exclusively for an educational purpose (e.g., residential colleges, adult education centres).
2. Government or local government institutions including an educational aim in their programmes (e.g., ministries of health and agriculture, local social welfare services).
3. Independent institutions existing primarily or exclusively for an educational purpose and also in receipt of financial support from public funds (universities through extension or adult education department).
4. Independent institutions including an educational purpose among their aims and in receipt of financial support from public funds.
5. Independent institutions existing primarily or exclusively for an educational purpose and not in receipt of financial support from public funds (e.g., commercial colleges and correspondence schools).
6. Wholly independent institutions including a specific educational purpose among their aims or using education as one of the means of achieving their aims (e.g., church organizations, trade unions).

8. Auxiliaries of education (e.g., museums and libraries).
9. The mass media, insofar as they consciously fulfil an educational function.
10. Voluntary local associations including an educational aim among their activities (e.g., clubs, hobby societies).

Such diversity is difficult to grasp by those educators who have been conditioned to think of education as being synonymous with schooling and who have dealt with the predominant institutional forms (schools, colleges and universities) exclusively. The fact that more adults are pursuing systematic education in other than the traditional educational institutions not only accounts for the difficulty non-adult educators have in trying to grasp the institutional dimensions of the field but also explains why the collection of a complete set of baseline data on participation, participants, programmes and providers poses such a difficult challenge.

ADULT EDUCATION FIELD FOCI

Although the knowledge content of the field is most often categorized according to programmatic considerations such as the type of sponsoring institution, the specific audience, or the specialized knowledge to be conveyed, from an adult education disciplinary perspective, such classifications are dysfunctional in that they emphasize practical over theoretical considerations. Verner's suggested categories intentionally minimize practical considerations and emphasize fundamental theoretical groupings: (1) adult learning; (2) psychology of adults; (3) physiology of aging; (4) adult instruction; (5) instructional processes; (6) instructional devices; (7) the client system; (8) the organizing system; (9) the social setting; (10) the role of adult education; and (11) historical foundations (1978: p. 138). These categories define both the primary areas of content and major foci of research.

GRADUATE STUDY

The first undergraduate course on adult education in Canada was taught in 1935 at Sir George Williams College by Kenneth Norris. Although J. Roby Kidd taught the first graduate level course in 1951 at the Ontario College of Education, it was not until 1961 that Coolie Verner was named the first full-time professor of adult education in the first full graduate programme of adult education at The University of British Columbia. Graduate programmes of adult education, some designated by that name and others by titles such as extension education, have been established at ten additional universities: Alberta, Dalhousie, Guelph, Manitoba, McGill, Montreal, Saskatchewan, Toronto (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), Victoria, and St. Francis Xavier.

The most comprehensive survey of degree programmes for training professional adult educators was conducted by Griffith and Cloutier in 1970-71. Preparing full-time researchers was not identified as the primary purpose of any of the programmes. Instead the most commonly named career goal at the doctoral level was that of adult education administrator, a finding entirely consistent with the relatively low research emphasis and productivity of the field.

Professional preparation for individuals seeking either to enter the field or for individuals already in the field who wish to upgrade themselves differs from professional preparation programmes in most other areas. Verner and associates noted that "Professional education in adult education is usually offered on the graduate level which attracts individuals from the field so that it tends to be post- rather than pre-vocational education. The students enrolled for graduate study tend to be older than is the case in other disciplines with those receiving the doctorate averaging 36 to 40 years of age" (Verner and Associates, 1970: p. 47).

RESEARCH COMPILATIONS

Canadian efforts to compile and analyze both degree and non-degree adult education research have been led by James Draper, Associate Professor

of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Draper: 1970, 1974, 1978, 1981; Draper, Niemi and Touchette, 1969; and Draper and Yadao, n.d.). Draper and Yadao conducted a survey of degree research and reported nineteen studies completed and thirty in progress during 1969 (Draper and Yadao: n.d.). The Canadian Association for Adult Education, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and the Institut Canadien d'Education des Adultes jointly published an inventory of non-degree adult education research in Canada conducted in 1969. The survey questionnaire was mailed to 1676 institutions, associations and agencies in all parts of Canada.

Nine types of respondents reported their providing of financial support to underwrite adult education research: universities, voluntary associations, federal government, community colleges, school boards, provincial crown corporations, federal crown corporations, and business and industry (p. 67).

In 1974 Draper produced a study of thesis research conducted at the University of Toronto between 1900 and 1970 that related to adult education. He found relevant research studies in the numbers indicated for each of the following departments:

Education	66 (including 19 from adult education)
Social Work	37
Psychology	29
Sociology	6
Library Science	4
Geography	3
Anthropology	1
Economics	1
English	1
History	1
Music	1
Planning	1
Political Science	1

Draper's views on adult education research conducted in Canada are presented in the 1978 book of readings on Canadian Adult Education. He noted that the descriptive method of research is most widely employed and

that experimental and theoretical research is scarce. With regard to who is doing the research, Draper observed:

Researchers represent a very wide range of subject matter specializations with very few reporting that the subject matter specialization in the last university degree which they received was actually in the area of adult education. Furthermore, most of the non-degree research in adult education which is being conducted in Canada is being done by persons who have not had formal training in research methodology (pp. 129-130).

Most recently Draper (1981) has identified 326 magistral and 61 doctoral theses completed in Canada up to and including 1977. Draper notes that "The study was entirely dependent upon the information submitted by the seven participating Canadian universities" (1981: p. 1). The seven universities were University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Guelph, Université de Montréal, University of Saskatchewan, St. Francis Xavier University and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto). The degree programmes in the several universities were Ph.D., Ed.D., M.A., M.A.A. (Master of Arts in Andragogie), M.C.Ed. (Master of Continuing Education), M.Ed., M.Sc. and M.Sc.Ag. (Master of Science in Agriculture) (1981: p. 2).

Draper categorized fifty-six doctoral dissertations in adult education completed at the universities of British Columbia and Toronto in seven categories with one dissertation which did not fit any of the categories (1981: p. 68).

Generic Research Design	Number	Percentage
Historical	5	11%
Model/tool building/testing	5	9%
Library	3	5%
Evaluation	3	5%
Grounded Theory/Phenomenological		
Experimental	2	4%
Other	1	2%
Survey	34	61%

Draper was also able to identify master's theses dealing with adult education that had been written at other universities. In sum, he identified 451 master's theses completed in ten Canadian universities through 1980 (1981: p. 141), and 106 doctoral dissertations from five Canadian universities through 1980 (1981: pp. 157-158).

THE NATURE OF ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

In examining the body of adult education research that had been conducted in the United Kingdom prior to 1970, Edward Hutchinson, long-time executive officer of the National Institute of Adult Education observed:

The number of studies that can be considered as experimental research designed to test particular hypotheses is very small. There is, however, a larger body of works which attempts, within varying degrees of rigour, to clarify, quantify or evaluate the characteristics of situations, participants and non-participants, methods, organization, and administration (Hutchinson, 1970: p. 1).

Yet he noted that the remarkable aspect is not that much of the adult education research literature is "limited, sporadic and uncoordinated," rather, given the restricted number of full-time personnel and the financial limitations, it is much more remarkable that there has been so much reflection and recorded comment and a number of studies of substance (1970: p. ii).

In 1974 the British National Institute of Adult Education published Research and Adult Education, a compilation of abstracts and summaries principally of magistral and doctoral theses completed since 1975. The author, Alan Charnley, classified the 191 documents in the following categories:

Particular Movements and Organizations	57 studies
Participation	44 studies
Educational Methodology	34 studies
Theory of Education	15 studies
Historical and Descriptive Surveys	12 studies
Organization and Administration	9 studies
Staffing	9 studies
Guidance and Counselling	6 studies
Curricula and Courses	5 studies

This listing reflects a well-established tendency to emphasize the importance of particular institutions and to be concerned with the phenomena of participation since, in voluntary educational activities, the number of continuing learners is the most important factor in determining the continuation of both programmes and the provision of bodies. Beyond that survival concern, adult educators quite understandably show persisting interest in the methods and theory of education.

RESEARCH TRENDS

Research in adult education as in other areas does not develop evenly. Instead, topics and methods of study enjoy periods of popularity and periods of relative neglect. In Canada two of the historical treatments of single institutions of adult education are Fitzpatrick's 1920 treatment of the Frontier College and Coady's 1939 report of the Antigonish movement. Such documentary reports were produced in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada in considerable number and this form probably continues to constitute the largest single category of types of studies, though its popularity is not so great as it has been.

In the 1930's Sandiford's landmark study, which attempted to present a comprehensive picture of adult education in each province, was the first major effort to draw a map of adult education activity in Canada. It served to identify the diverse institutional providers and to present an overview of the myriad of activities which could appropriately be called adult education.

Since 1935 a number of other studies of institutions sponsors and of participants have been undertaken in Canada, but there is still no comprehensive regularized system for the periodic collection of such data.

In the 1960's adult learning and development gained increasing popularity. Tough, who is now a professor of adult education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, was a doctoral student at the University of Chicago in the early 60's, and his dissertation focussed on self-directed learners. He has examined the incidence and extent of self-directed learning in a number of countries ranging from Oceania to Africa. His 1979 research on self-directed learning has gained international visibility and is cited regularly in publications of adult educators in many parts of the world.

In more recent years there has been some tendency for adult education researchers to employ increasingly sophisticated methods of data collection and analysis, but this increased sophistication in quantitative empirical analysis has not been marked by a correspondingly sophisticated development.

Although practicability is a vital consideration, the action orientation of most adult educators has been identified as an impediment to the development of the field. Bernbaum (1980) asserts that most adult education practitioners

are psychologically unsuited to conducting research. The small number of theoretically and research oriented adult educators accounts for some of the problems in the development of suitable analytical concepts and theories, difficulties which are common to educational research in general. Boreham (1980) stresses the importance of training adult educators to appreciate the scope and relevance of research as an essential element in programmes for the development of professional adult educators conceptually and theoretically.

Conceptual frameworks for social and educational change are of particular interest currently to those European adult educators who believe the most important function of adult education is to contribute to the redistribution of resources (Hoehiell and Rubenson, n.d.). In Europe both equilibrium and conflict theories of change are considered, but in North America, Marxian and other conflict theories have been largely ignored by adult educators (Paulston, 1977). Although the use of an equilibrium theory perspective fosters unity in the field, the absence of any consideration of the possible applicability of a conflict theory sets limits on the richness of the consideration of the phenomena theoretically.

A brief recapitulation of trends in adult education research reveals a strong shift from emphasizing historical and descriptive studies to a highlighting of participation studies and the examination of the characteristics of adult learners. Phenomenological and action research methods are favoured by some investigators while others argue that established research methods are frequently misused and that great benefits would be obtained by upgrading the quality of research which employs traditional methods. Each approach has its appropriate application, and encouraging one to the exclusion of the other would produce a one-sided perception of the phenomena of adult education.

ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS AND LITERATURE

Although adult education researchers show some interest in affiliating with adult-education oriented, special-interest groups in major educational research organizations, in the last quarter-century groups of adult education researchers have established their own associations.

Although adult educators are able to submit their manuscripts for consideration for publications in almost all of the educational journals, several research-oriented journals are exclusively concerned with adult education. The journal with the largest circulation is Adult Education, a quarterly published by the Adult Education Association of the United States. No comparable journal is produced in Canada, although the Canadian Association for Adult Education publishes a quarterly magazine, Learning. Convergence, the quarterly journal of the International Council for Adult Education, is produced in Toronto and is devoted largely to the presentation of essays and accounts of individuals' experiences and beliefs. In general, Canadian adult education researchers who wish to report their research and to bring it to the attention of the largest number of adult education researchers submit their manuscripts to the American journal, Adult Education.

Canadian researchers in adult education are likely to belong to the American Educational Research Association, the largest organization of educational researchers in the world. The importance of adult educators in this Association has fluctuated over the last thirty years. In 1950, 1953, 1959 and 1965 the June issues of the Review of Educational Research were devoted entirely to adult education. A change in editorial policy has resulted in a sixteen year hiatus. The most comprehensive and widely known summary and synthesis of adult education research is An Overview of Adult Education Research, which was written in 1959 by a team of researchers at Columbia University under the leadership of Edmund Brunner.

Paul Belanger, executive of the Institut Canadien d'Education des Adultes, provided an analysis of adult education research conducted in Quebec between 1960 and 1969. He identified three types of research projects:

(1) Those research papers trying to relate the educational action to consequent behaviour of participants in specific social milieux, and consequently to analyze the interaction between education and development.

(2) The studies made either on the learning process or on the small groups dynamics.

(3) The short-term studies like the identification of educational needs; the clientele analysis; the evaluation as well as the feasibility studies (Belanger, 1973: p. 20).

Belanger found one-third of the studies were in category 1, one-tenth were in category 2 and the balance, 57%, in category 3. For the ten-year period he concluded: "The main trend of research on adult education in Quebec is then for projects showing an increased methodological systematization but without in general, a similar evolution in the theoretical effort" (Belanger, 1973: p. 21).

Cross explained that there are at least three reasons why theory building in adult education has proven so difficult:

(1) Most adult educators have a marketplace orientation, which tends to preclude the investment of much time in searching for explanations of complex phenomena.

(2) The field of adult education has produced few scholars. Graduates find lucrative administrative or teaching positions in which research is not part of the job.

(3) Adult education is a multidisciplinary applied field in which behavior is influenced by large numbers of variables (1981: pp. 110-111).

Research on Participation

Research on participation has been a persistent emphasis area in adult education possibly because participation is rarely compulsory.

Another reason why the phenomena of participation have been a primary focus of adult education research is that programmes often fail to attract the audience they were primarily intended to serve.

Persistent Non-Participants

In its report, Learning Opportunities for Adults, O.E.C.D. identified two categories of groups who do not participate in adult education in proportion to their numbers. The first category includes groups with economic, geographic and social disadvantages:

- (1) unemployed young adults, including premature school leavers;
- (2) certain rural populations;
- (3) migrant workers;
- (4) immigrants (foreign workers);
- (5) aged;
- (6) urban poverty groups;
- (7) unskilled and semiskilled workers;
- (8) unemployed and under-employed workers with little education;
- (9) unemployed and under-employed adult workers;
- (10) those experiencing linguistic problems (O.E.C.D., 1977: p. 32).

Although all the groups in this category participate at a much lower rate than groups who do not have these disadvantages, there is no reason to believe that a simple expansion of existing programmes would have a positive effect on their participation rate.

The second category of groups consists of those who are reachable, i.e., inclined to participate if particular obstacles were removed:

- (1) Those who would like to participate but lack the requisite financial or other means (including transport);
- (2) Those who are not individually conscious of wishing to participate but would participate as members of a community, for example, in a resident's association or amenity group;
- (3) Those who would like to participate but lack the appropriate information about what is available and how to apply for admission;
- (4) Those who are afraid of the possible reactions of their employers and the implications for the job security (1977: p. 34).

Data Bases

Describing the dimensions of Canadian adult education is a formidable task which few scholars have attempted. The first survey, described by its chief author as "incomplete and imperfect," was reported in 1935 by Peter Sandiford, Professor of Educational Psychology and Director of the Department of Educational Research in the Ontario College of Education, University of Toronto.

No comparable nationwide study of adult education in Canada has been undertaken in the intervening forty-six years. However, in 1976 Vaniewica, under the sponsorship of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, conducted a survey of the demand for part-time adult learning in Ontario.

The data base for adult education is not much better than it was in 1935. So little attention has been paid to the types of data needed to describe the scope and extent of activity and the nature of participants that there is not yet agreement on what data should be collected, despite the commendable efforts by Statistics Canada (1973, 1974, 1975a, 1975b).

Forty years ago the Minister of Education in British Columbia asked the members of the Public Library Commission to make a general study of the facilities for adult education in the province and to submit suggestions and preliminary recommendations for its development (Lidster and Associates, 1942: p. 1). After assessing the adequacy of adult education provision in the Province, the members of the study group made a central recommendation: "The essential requirement for any successful program of adult education in British Columbia is a directing, controlling, coordinating, unifying, Centralized Authority."

PROVINCIAL STUDIES OF ADULT EDUCATION

During the last decade the provinces have become increasingly interested in studying adult education and in formulating policy for its support and operation. While the 1960's can be viewed as a decade of federal initiatives, such as the passage of the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act of 1960 and the Adult Occupational Training Act of 1967, the 1970's were years of growing provincial interest and activity (Selman, 1981). The 1974 Survey of British Columbia Community Colleges, the Survey of Non-Credit Continuing Education in Ottawa conducted in the same year and the 1975 Report on the Education of Adults for the Federation of Catholic School Boards in Quebec are examples of provincial research which, while not particularly impressive as examples of rigorous research, are of significance because they served as the basis for the formulation of recommendations and legislation.

Alberta issued a major statement on adult education in 1972, A Future of Choices -- A Choice of Futures (Alberta Commission on Educational Planning, 1972). Although this document encompasses the total educational response to predicted social and economic trends, considerable attention was given to the

place of adult education. While it was suggested that existing organizations should incorporate responsibility for further education into their mandate, it was pointed out that colleges, universities and community schools should have clearly differentiated functions. Integrated coordination was emphasized as a high priority.

A concern for coordinated planning is at the heart of Alberta's approach to the provision of adult education. As the 1972 report was being released, work was already under way to develop local further education councils, a new form of inter-agency coordinative committees funded by the provincial government (Long, 1976). Policies have been adopted to govern the operation of the councils, confirming their role in adult education provision (Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower, 1979). Although this innovative approach is one of the newest concepts in enlarging educational opportunities at the community level and even though the guidelines for the further education councils professes a commitment to research, little is known about their effectiveness and their advantages and disadvantages in comparison with other approaches to coordination.

Provincial initiative in adult education was also stimulated by the 1972 UNESCO report, Learning to Be, which generated world wide discussion of adult education policy needs. The Province of British Columbia responded with the Report of the Committee on Continuing and Community Education in British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1976), which advocated assigning a higher priority to, and providing increased government support for, adult education, arguing that society as well as the individual adult learner stands to benefit from the investment.

A burst of provincial activity recurred in 1981 when Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec all released reports on adult education.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education commissioned a one-man study of adult education. This report emphasizes the need for improved coordination (Stewart, 1981). The infra-structure is described as "top heavy in the sense of lacking sounding boards and contacts with everyday people" (p. 2). This report recommends the formation of community councils to enable the system to respond more effectively to local and regional needs. The second pressing need identified in the report is for improved dissemination of information about adult education opportunities.

Continuing Education: The Third System (Ontario Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1981) was distributed throughout Ontario as a discussion paper, conceptualizing adult education as a third system of educational provision, complementing the elementary-secondary system and the post secondary system. This discussion paper does not propose recommendations; instead, it poses a list of issues to be resolved after public discussion.

In Québec a series of regional study sessions preceded the release of *Adult Education in Quebec: Possible Solutions* (Québec Commission d'Etude sur la Formation des Adultes, 1981), which describes an organizational model to foster the aims of accessibility, democratization, and the sharing of knowledge. The establishment of a single controlling body, not a separate department of adult education but a para-governmental structure, is proposed. This central administrative body would be responsible for adult education policies and supervision of regional centres.

Across Canada interest is increasing in rethinking the role of the provinces in adult education provision. There is dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs and a desire to formulate a more systematic approach. Some provinces have progressed to the stage of implementing innovative structures while others are in the midst of reconsidering their programmes and public preferences. An examination of the reports that are steering the future of adult education in Canada reveals a heavy emphasis on the assessment of public opinion and, with the exception of Alberta, little overt consideration of organizational practices elsewhere or the relevant adult education literature.

Major decisions, such as the choice of colleges as the primary provincial instrument for providing adult education, are being made on the basis of scanty evidence and reasoning that may be quite limited. While the sense of urgency to develop policies is understandable and in some sense commendable, the repercussions of poorly formulated decisions may be formidable. The assignment of roles to institutions, the establishment of new structures and the adoption of operating procedures all require careful research if effective and efficient delivery systems are to be founded and maintained.

RESEARCH IN PROVINCIAL PROVISIONS

Research dealing with the nature of adult education provision in a single province or comparing provincial systems is rare but has been begun. Byrne (1981) prepared a report on three public policies (further education policy, consortium policy and community school policy), each of which affects the provision of adult education opportunities in Alberta. He asked three questions about each policy:

1. Does the policy integrate one or more manifestations of continuing education within a particular pattern of coordination and control?
2. Does the policy rationalize offerings by reducing duplication?
3. Does the policy maximize the benefits of continuing education at the same time minimizing costs? (1981: p. 4).

After examining the policies, including their funding arrangements, Byrne called for a rethinking of the potential conflicts among the policies, stating, "Next September several towns . . . could have within their boundaries, a Further Education Coordinator, a Consortium Director, and a Community School Coordinator, all intent on extending continuing education services within the same constituency. This might produce more coordination than those communities can endure" (1981: p. 35). If those involved are uninformed about the effects of various policies, improving coordination can lead to new conflicts and to a decrease in efficiency as provincial funds are used to underwrite the costs of competing coordinative mechanisms.

Studies of adult education organization are generally confined to a single province, a single institution or a single type of institution. Professor Hayden Roberts of the Faculty of Extension of the University of Alberta is completing a landmark study which compares the organization of adult education in Alberta with the organization in Quebec.

Canadian studies of systems for providing adult education programmes at the community level, in which institutions cooperate in determining what learning opportunities will be provided and by whom, are rare. Provincial support is supplied most commonly to a given kind of institution for conducting specific types of programmes. Such cooperation and coordination as may occur is the result of initiative taken by the director of one of

the sponsoring institutions, who may perceive advantages to all of the cooperating institutions and to the adult learners in the region.

In examining the coordination of programmes, personnel and services in adult education, Griffith (1980) concluded that voluntary coordination is unlikely to emerge in more than a few isolated cases. He predicted that if a coordinated system of adult education provision is to be developed, it will result from legislation that rewards those agencies engaged in cooperative arrangements and denies support to those which insist on working in solitary fashion. A similar viewpoint is presented by Hutchinson (1981).

ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Various individuals and groups have attempted to identify the research that is most needed in adult education (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1980; Brunner and Associates, 1959; Knox, 1977; Kreitlow, 1964). They have not, however, revealed the line of reasoning which they employed in setting their priorities. Accordingly, there does not appear to be a generally accepted process for setting research priorities for adult education, a process which for the most part appears to have been largely intuitive. Given the factors which have been identified by Knox (1977) and Verner (1978) as influencing the choice of topics selected for research by graduate students and other researchers, it is apparent that the selection is determined only partly by an assessment of lacunae in the knowledge base of the field. Accordingly, even those documents whose authors aspired to set priorities for research do not provide a systematic procedure for doing so and, hence, anyone attempting to engage in a process of priority setting must first develop the logic of justification afresh rather than adopting an already established heuristic. Kidd's most recent paper on needed research, "Research Needs in Adult Education" (1981), identifies an abundance of research opportunities but provides scant guidance for determining how priorities can be set systematically. Nevertheless, he favours macro- over micro-studies.

Adult education researchers have been inclined to work at the micro level rather than at the macro level. They have examined the relationships between instructors and learners in individual classes much more frequently

than they have attempted to deal with the operation of the entire institution within its community and with regard to common institutional problems. The O.E.C.D. report, Learning Opportunities for Adults, claims that the financing of adult education has been ignored for the most part by researchers. Because of the absence of detailed information on the present scale of expenditures and the means used for financing programmes, no province or nation seems to have complete information on the costs and magnitude of adult education in its area. In the absence of such information, policy makers are sufficiently informed to enable them to plan and provide for a financial policy that is optimal for supporting adult education provision by both governmental and non-governmental organizations at the community level.

DATA NEEDS

Because adult education is provided not by a single institutional form such as schools for elementary and secondary education, and colleges and universities for post-secondary education, the statistical base essential for describing the nature and extent of adult participation in formally organized educational programmes in Canada remains unknown. Fragmentary data on adult registrations and enrollments exist for some school, college and university programmes, but little attention has been paid to developing a systematic data collection process and to specifying the nature of the data to be collected. The Program Services Division of the Post-Secondary Department of the British Columbia Ministry of Education has called attention to a part of the need (1980: p. 6):

There has been a steady increase in the number of part-time adult students at the post-secondary level. Projections indicate an acceleration of this trend in the 1980's. Thus, in an era of retrenchment and shift in the composition of post-secondary students, more refined and disaggregated data will be required to reveal the social and demographic characteristics of the client population. Qualitative and quantitative data of both part-time and full-time students are required. Studies carefully defining specific data needs would be beneficial.

DESCRIPTIVE STUDY NEEDS

Although educational research, particularly of the quantitative empirical variety, has become increasingly complex in education - a trend which may be accounted for at least in part by the tendency of educational researchers to emulate the designs employed in the physical sciences - some adult educators who have surveyed the research in this field believe that there is a continuing need for non-quantitative studies. Brunner and associates noted that the adult education field has grown so rapidly that it has not yet raised many fundamental questions of itself. They concluded:

There is a great need of more comprehensive descriptive and analytical study of patterns of formal and informal interaction among the various agencies involved in adult education. Case study analyses of the functions of community councils, adult education councils and other coordinative bodies based upon study of records, observation, and interview could be used to identify factors associated with the success or failure of these bodies (1959: p. 241).

Although a score of years has passed since that conclusion was written, there is little evidence to support a claim that the need they identified has been satisfied.

EMERGENT CONCERNS

Two distinct kinds of actions can be taken to increase the quantity, quality and utility of Canadian adult education research. The first kind of action is to support selected areas of research which have marked utility for Canadian society and for the advancement of adult education as an attractive area for research. The second is to provide an improved system for encouraging and assisting in the planning and execution of research and subsequently in its dissemination.

Areas for Specific Support

The three areas which are designated as appropriate for special

support are those which will provide the information and insights required for the formulation of effective public policy for adult education.

Wise policy formulation cannot occur in the absence of a valid data base, and the current data are inadequate to show fully the extent of adult education provision and participation in the full range of programmes in both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Inasmuch as there is not an agreed-upon system of data collection for adult education provincially or for Canada as a whole, the primary need is for the formulation of a standard system of data collection that is acceptable both to the relevant ministries of the provinces and to the scholars already identified with the adult education field. Until complete data on provision, participation and funding sources have been collected on a systematic and recurrent basis, all policy decisions can be no more than expressions of intention and opinion rather than informed actions founded on an adequate knowledge of the entire system.

The second major area requiring concerted research activity is the comparative study of alternative provincial and regional schemes for the funding and coordination of adult education provision. Although innovative approaches are being used in various provinces and localities, no systematic plan has been developed to ensure that the results, intended and unintended, anticipated and unanticipated, are recorded and analyzed. Also, little is known about the effects on the adult education agencies of infusions of federal funds restricted to short-term temporary programmes of training. Until the interrelationships among institutions providing adult education are better understood, any attempts at coordinating their activities to improve the quality, quantity, and utility of adult education provision in Canadian communities will be guided solely by intuition and limited acquaintance with a few alternatives.

In contrast to these two macro-type studies, the third area involves a micro-type approach to understanding the complex phenomena of participation. Traditional approaches to studying adult education participation which consisted of little more than correlational or multiple regression studies can be supplanted by emerging basic theoretical investigations which address participation and non-participation from political, economic and sociological as well as psychological conceptual frameworks. If this area of concern is

to be examined theoretically, it can yield benefits of utility to educational providers whose practical concerns lie with selected audiences such as the aged, inmates of correctional institutions, lone parents, immigrants, under-employed, unemployed and native peoples.

Improving the Research System

Adult education research can be improved in quality, quantity and utility through a number of approaches, only the most important of which are identified here.

University graduate programmes are staffed by individuals whose research preparation has been relatively narrow. Provision for educational leave which would be used for upgrading the research sophistication of university teachers of adult education and supervisors of graduate study would make it practical for dedicated faculty members with pressing ongoing financial obligations to invest time in professional improvement.

Adult education graduate students are typically among the older students in faculties of education, which are, in turn, likely to be the oldest group of graduate students in any faculty of a university. Fellowship funds which are entirely adequate to support the young single students found in many graduate departments are inadequate for the older adult education graduate student who is likely to have, not only a dependent spouse, but also several dependent children. Financial support from graduate students could reasonably make allowance for the heavier financial demands faced by the older students found in faculties of education and particularly adult education.

The provision of funds, targeted for adult education research but not restricted to investigators holding degrees in adult education in itself, encourages researchers from relevant disciplines to undertake such investigations, utilizing the theoretical formulations from their own primary fields. In a young field such as adult education, the cadre of researchers can be augmented by the addition of highly trained researchers from a number of social science disciplines who become attracted both to the phenomena of adult education and the financial resources available to support research in this area.

Adult educators by nature seem to be action oriented and attracted more strongly by opportunities to act as change agents than by the challenge of advancing frontiers of knowledge. Professors of adult education often exemplify the model of the clinical professor, immersed in practice but withdrawing briefly for reflection and for the teaching of the next generation of adult educators. Their lack of experience in writing proposals for funded research makes that process appear more formidable to them than it does to more sophisticated researchers in education and other social sciences. A fully sponsored workshop to provide adult educators in universities and elsewhere with additional training in proposal development and with advice on how to respond to a qualified rejection might provide the stimulus essential to overcoming the present reluctance to seek research support.

In Canada the problem of dissemination of research results does not lie in a shortage of journals, magazines and newsletters but, rather, in the difficulty of overcoming the balkanized nature of the field. Each special group within adult education has its own newsletter or magazine and typically aspires to producing its own journal, which will publish articles dealing with the sharing of experience in a narrowly restricted area. Modest support for a 'house organ' for the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, the only Canadian organization created expressly to foster adult education research and to improve communication among Canadian adult education researchers, might provide the essential support this fledgling organization requires if it is to survive and mature.

Adult education research in Canada can be improved in quality, quantity and utility by adopting policies and providing opportunities to researchers based on knowledge of the field and those who are available to conduct such research. This report is an attempt to draw upon knowledge of the field gained through extended involvement in adult education scholarship and practice in order to formulate recommendations for actions to produce those improvements.

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